

TULAREMIA

Tularemia is a zoonotic bacterial disease caused by *Francisella tularensis*. Infection occurs through various routes including the bite from infected ticks, flies or mosquitoes, handling the carcasses of infected animals, eating the meat from infected animals, or inhalation of dust from contaminated soil, hay or grain. The clinical presentation depends on the route of infection and most often presents as an indolent ulcer at the site of introduction of the bacteria, with swelling of regional lymph nodes. Ingestion of the organism presents with pharyngitis, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain. Inhalation may present with pneumonic involvement or a primary septicemia. All clinical types may be complicated by pneumonia and may have a fatal outcome without specific treatment.

Laboratory Criteria for Confirmation:

- Isolation of *Francisella tularensis* from a clinical specimen, **OR**
- Fourfold or greater change in agglutination titer between paired sera obtained ≥ 2 weeks apart and analyzed at the same time and in the same laboratory.

In Kentucky

2000

Three cases were confirmed and a fourth was considered probable. Two of the confirmed cases were in children less than four years of age. Each child had a history of a recent tick bite. The third case resulted from a cat bite during the administration of antibiotics to a sick cat.

The cases occurred in the North Central District, Lincoln Trail District and the Green River District.